

Real Stories of Young Entrepreneurs in Wisconsin

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School & Grade: 12th grade at Menomonee Falls High School

Business Name: Snozberry, LLC

What inspired you to start your business? Tell us about your inspiration, your idea and how it became a reality.

I wanted to create a business that had a sole purpose of providing financial support to high school students to help pay for college tuition because I did not want to see a student with high potential and ambition be discouraged to follow their dreams and achieve their highest goals simply because they could not afford it

Describe your product / service, purpose / goals, features / benefits, unique selling point.

Our product is essentially shaved ice smothered in fresh fruit smoothie blends with customer imbedded in the middle of it all. To my knowledge, we are the only company in Wisconsin that sells these specialty desserts and I know we are the only company in the state with proper machines to do so (as confirmed by one of my suppliers). But the true uniqueness of our company is the mission – to support high school students aspiring to obtain some type of post-secondary educational degree. We provide a physical location out in our community where members and alumni can donate any amount of money, from \$1 to \$500, via credit card directly to Menomonee Falls scholarships or just buy a delicious treat for their child and still support MFHS. The recipients of the donations are hand selected based off of a written essay prompted to be expressive drive and motivation – key qualities of successful people.

Tell us about yourself and how you make your business succeed.

When I was 13 I started a small skateboard manufacturing company. My friends and family both questioned my ability to actually produce a skateboard deck out of 7 layers of 1/8 inch thick veneer sheets. I remember approaching my grandpa with a blueprint of the press I needed to construct in order to mold and shape the wood. As a sheet metal worker, I thought a metal press wouldn't be a challenge for him but he simply told me that it was impossible to do. As a kid I always saved all of my money because I realized I would rather spend it on bigger things I really wanted rather than little snacks and toys I didn't really need. After working for a company putting flyers on car windows, and probably after shoveling a few driveways, I had enough cash to buy a press. I never saw any risk because it was a hobby – something I genuinely loved doing. I didn't make skateboards to make a profit, I made them because I saw a problem with the decks me and my friends were riding and I wanted to better ones. When I was 14 I asked the owner of a skate shop in Menomonee Falls called Tweak Boarding if he would sell my decks in his shop and he enthusiastically said yes. But my parents couldn't afford to support my venture and when I was 14 I couldn't shovel enough driveway ways to make the initial investment needed for production.

Something you won't notice in Snozberry's financial statement is profit. We are a seasonal company and specifically Snozberry is a relatively new venture for me. I knew I had to operate Snozberry successfully and to do so I spent a majority of time and money on research and development. 2013 will be the first year with significant cash flow and I have no worries of success because I took the time to learn and set up operations in place that I needed to be successful.

However, if you happen to measure success in financial return and bottom lines, then I guess you could say my secure venture, Srzmods, was very successful. This is where I learned how to work

and manage a team to be successful. In Srzmods I learned everything from financial management, marketing, customer relations/support, and teamwork to social networking and making relationships. We were only 14 at the time but so we didn't understand that Paypal would close our accounts after exceeding \$500 in one hour of operation because we had to claim taxes – we genuinely didn't know, so we would just open new accounts and keep accepting payment. I got out of Srzmods because I realized I felt that my business in the company was unethical. It was one of the most crucial ethical decision I have ever made because there was monetary value in Srzmods where people would offer \$5000 for 20% stake in the organization.

After I left Srzmods, I started constructing Snozberry. I decided that there were not going to be any cut corners in this venture. I needed to file for the LLC, register for an EIN, get all proper selling/vendor permits, and get temporary licenses from local Health Departments. Unlike most companies, I did not have the financial ability to hire attorneys for filing and tax advisors to defer the initial investment over a number of years to get the best tax benefit. I saw this as a learning opportunity and started researching. I asked local business owners and retired CEO's through SCORE Wisconsin for mentoring. I was never afraid to ask because I didn't know, and the more knowledge I had the better off Snozberry would be. So I strive for perfection and am willing to ask for help because that is how I learn and knowledge along with connections will lead to success in my business.

What are your future goals and vision for your business? How do you propose to develop your business?

Snozberry will become a franchise and establish multiple locations that are privately owned. The franchisee will pay royalties off of the net profit (making it more enticing for franchisees' then royalties based on gross income, creating incentive to open a Snozberry). I see a Snozberry location in every community to raise money for scholarships in a reliable way that not only benefits the educational system, but the owners and the community members as well.